

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

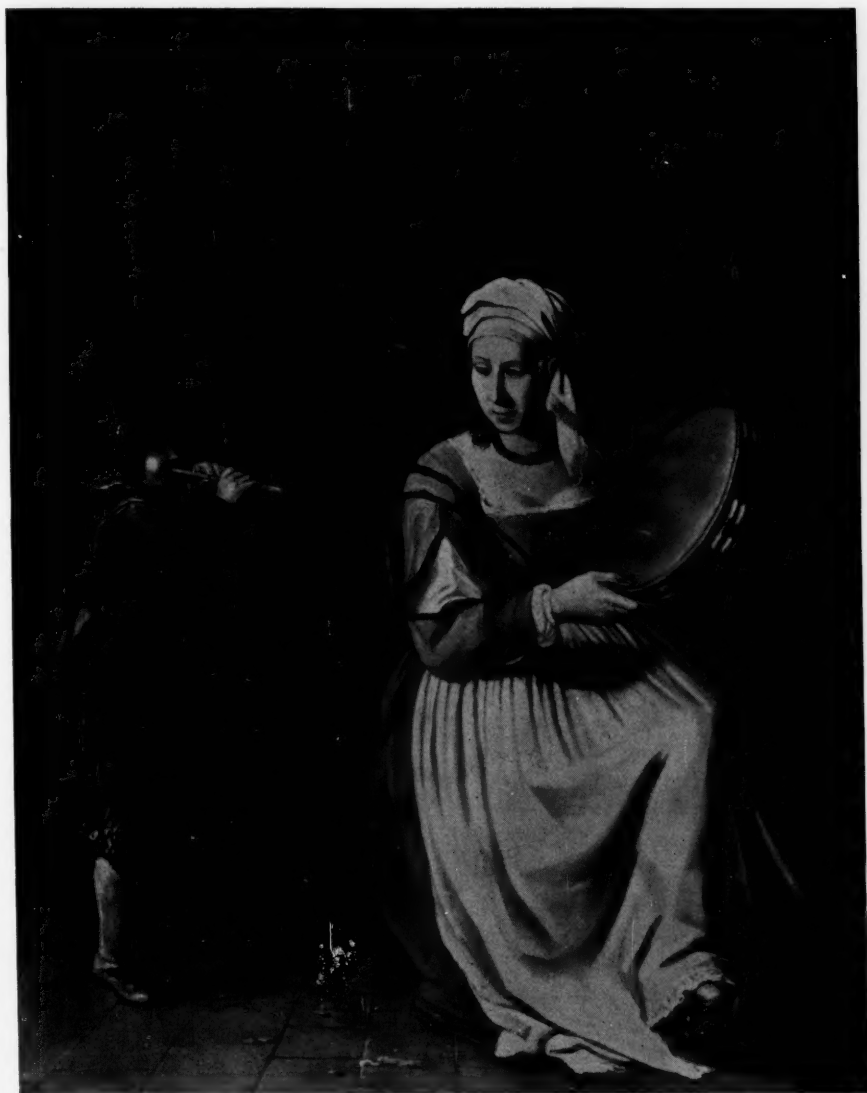
Bulletin

OF THE

ART DIVISION

Vol. 4, No. 1

Fall, 1951



MICHAEL SWEERTS (1624-1664), "The Tamborine Player"
*Museum Associates, the gift of John Jewett Garland
in Memory of his Brother*



Fig. 1 — JAN VAN DER HEYDEN (1637-1712)
 "Garden of the Old Palace, Brussels"
Gift of H. E. ten Cate (Almelo, Holland)

DUTCH PAINTINGS

New Acquisitions

Dutch seventeenth century paintings of the period of Frans Hals and Rembrandt belong to the most popular fields in the history of painting, and are of special interest to our public for their origin in the land where the Pilgrim fathers found sanctuary. Our collection, still small and until a few years ago consisting only of a few examples which came more or less accidentally to the Museum, is now slowly developing to a more representative one, giving a fuller idea of the many-

sidedness of Dutch painting in the arts of portraiture, landscape, still life and genre painting.

The tendency of American collectors to concentrate upon the greatest names resulted often in the undue neglect of excellent, lesser known artists who sometimes give a better idea of the character of a culture than do the great individualists. Besides, next to the great masters whose value does not change, other artists who appeal to the changing taste of modern times are being redis-



Fig. 2 — JAN BAPTIST WEENIX (1621-1663)
"Italian Harborscene"

Gift of William Randolph Hearst

covered. Among paintings that have been added to the collection, some are by artists of long-standing reputation, like the portrait painter *Paulus Moreelse*, the landscape painters *Jan van Goyen*

and *Aelbert Cuyp*, or the genre painter *Adriaen van Ostade*. But others like *Michael Sweerts* and *Jan van der Heyden* have come to the fore only in recent times. Although the works of the latter

have been sought by discriminating collectors since the eighteenth century, his present popularity is due mainly to his minute, almost photographic verism comparable to the works of modern surrealists.

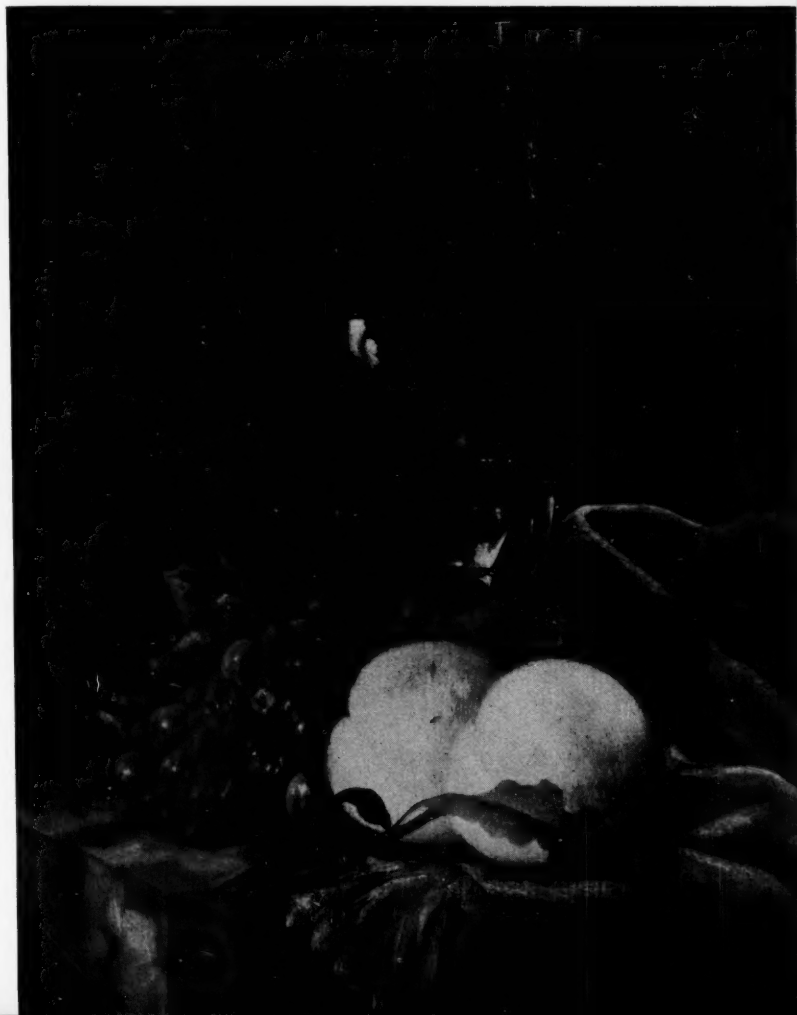
The painting by *Jan van der Heyden* (Fig. 1),¹ presented to the Museum by the Dutch collector Mr. H. E. ten Cate, represents the stylized garden of the "Old Palace" at Brussels, of which the artist painted several views, all with an intricate perspective and executed most minutely in detail. Every brick on the walls bordering the sidewalks is indicated, and the charming figures are painted with the delight of a mediaeval miniaturist. While van der Heyden could draw figures very well as his engravings prove, the staffage in our painting, especially the deer grazing on the lawn, are so exquisite in execution that we may attribute them to his excellent collaborator *Adriaen van de Velde*, who painted the figures in some of van der Heyden's best paintings. In spite of the minuteness of detail, the artist achieved a well sustained composition of large aspect, by enveloping the foreground into a uniform warm shadow and by adding to it a colorful, broadly seen evening sky. If van de Velde painted the staffage in our painting, its date must be before 1672 when van de Velde died. The picture belongs undoubtedly to the earlier period of van der Heyden, when he was about 35 years of age.

The increasing interest in the personality of *Michael Sweerts* is connected with the study of the school of *Caravaggio*, whose art, with its

influence on the greatest seventeenth century masters, has been in the center of study of the Baroque age. *Sweerts* belonged to those Netherlandish artists who studied in Italy, forming a link between the *Caravaggists*, with their French followers, and the Dutch and Flemish painters. Although he was born a Fleming (from Brussels)

¹Accession number A.6079.51-1, panel 19 x 22 inches, signed in full, right center. Formerly in the possession of Dr. N. Beets, Amsterdam. Described in *Hofstede de Groot, Catalogue Raisonné* (1927), Vol. VIII, No. 42.

Fig. 3 — ABRAHAM VAN BEYEREN (1620-1675)
"Still Life with Peaches"
The Balch Fund, Museum Associates



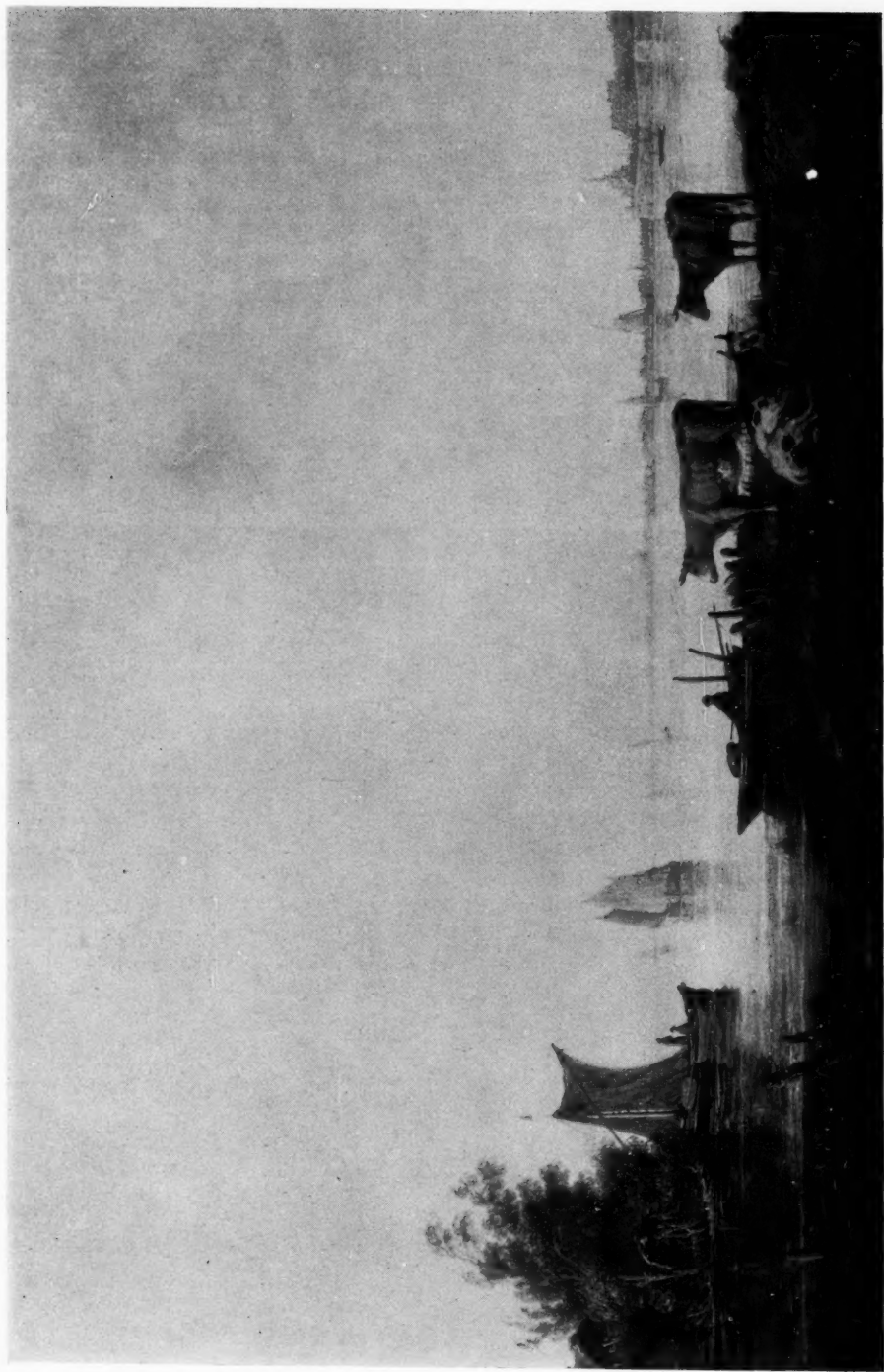


Fig. 4 — AELBERT CUYP (1605-1691)
 "The Maas near Dordrecht"
 Adele S. Brouning Memorial Collection, gift of
 Mildred Brouning Green and Judge Lucius P. Green

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he can be treated with the Dutch masters, as he became later a portrait painter of repute in Amsterdam.

"The Tambourine Player" (*Front Cover*),² a gift of Mr. John Jewett Garland, is a charming composition combining the Caravaggiesque tendency of strong contrast of dark and light, which results in a great plasticity of the figure, and a Northern homeliness in depicting the interior. While playing her instrument the woman sits comfortably on a chair, at her feet one of the little stools filled with hot coals to keep the feet warm. The boy playing the flute behind her is contrasted, in his lively movement, to the quietly posing woman, and through his diminishing scale gives space to the dark room. The white and blue of the woman's dress reminds us of the style of the Lenain's, the leading French genre painters, with whose art Sweerts must have been acquainted.

The longing of the Dutchman for the sun of Italy expressed itself in two different ways. Besides the painters who were attracted by the dark but strongly plastic style of Caravaggio and his school, there were those who painted landscapes under a golden sky in the classic romantic style, which was developed first in the school of Raphael and later by artists like *Agostino Caracci* and *Domenichino*, until it reached its height in the art of the great French masters Claude Lorrain and Poussin. To this group of painters belonged *Jan Both*, *Adam Pynacker*, *Willem Heusch*, *Jan Asselijn* and *Jan Baptist Weenix*. By the two last-named artists, the Museum has acquired fine examples as the gift of William Randolph Hearst, a "Roman Bridge" (the *Ponte Rotto*) by *Jan Asselijn* and an "Italian Harborscene" by *Weenix*

(Fig. 2).³ Both artists show in the architectural setting Roman monumental buildings which have influenced the broadness of their composition. The staffage which Weenix has added shows him as an excellent figure and animal painter, and is characteristic for his vividly illustrative and colorful manner.

To some degree *Aelbert Cuyp* is related to these masters, although his style is more Dutch, and more severe in the simplification of forms and concentration of light effects. But in the warm golden atmosphere which penetrates his landscapes and the classical structure of their outlines, a connection with the art of Claude Lorrain and the Italian masters can be observed, although Cuyp probably never left the boundaries of his homeland.

Cuyp's view of "The Maas near Dordrecht" (Fig. 4),⁴ the town of his activity, is an excellent example of his art. No one before him had dared to fill three-quarters of the space with an immense cloudless sky while the rest of the picture is occupied with the vast expanse of the river, reflecting the sky and separated from it only by a small strip of land, where in harmony with the calm scene peaceful cattle are grazing. The painting dates about 1645 when the artist was twenty-five years of age. He had passed his youthful period, represented in sometimes awkward compositions closely following Van Goyen, and had reached his early maturity, just before he developed his large-sized famous compositions in which the cattle staffage is often somewhat overpowering, and the color of the sky becomes a deep golden or at times reddish

²Accession number L.2100.51-38, panel 19 x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Formerly in the collection of Rudolf Ward Holzapfel, Santa Barbara. A companion piece of the same size, representing a woman doing needlework and a boy carrying a pail of water in the right background, was in the collection of Lord Mount Temple.

The painting "Young Man Holding a Lemon" (p.10 of this BULLETIN for Spring 1947), which was attributed tentatively to Sweerts, is probably by one of the Italian Caravagists by whom Sweerts was influenced.

³Accession number A.5141.50-932, 49 x 44 inches. On Jan Baptist Weenix, see W. Stechow, *Art Quarterly* 1948 (pp.181-198), where several paintings of the type of ours are mentioned, with the dates 1648 and 1649. Weenix was even mistaken for Vermeer in one of his finest portraits, the *Young Man with High Hat Placing His Hands upon a Balustrade*, sold as Vermeer (formerly Hoogendyk, Amsterdam). A large children's group (a girl and two boys) by J. B. Weenix, signed "Romae 1647", is in the New York art market.

⁴Accession number A.6052.50-1, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Formerly in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 5 — JAN VAN GOYEN (1596-1656)
 "Skating Scene"
Gift of the Misses Putnam (San Diego)

brown color. Our painting was produced at this early-middle period, when he created some of his most serene and perfect works.

A good idea of the art of Jan van Goyen is given in a very small, but enchanting "Skating Scene" (Fig. 5)⁵ the gift of the Misses Putnam of San Diego. It is a scene which could not have been painted anywhere but in Holland, where the frozen canals form in winter a means of transportation for carriages and men. The dark silhouettes of the sleigh and the skaters against the light

pink tones of the city towers in the distance, and a clouded wintry sky, show the fine observations characteristic of the realistic and impressionistic art of this greatest landscape painter of the Frans Hals period.

As a kind of companionpiece, and from the same donors, comes another small circular painting by *Adriaen van Ostade*, the most famous genre painter of this same period. It represents (Fig. 6)⁶ a peasant family, with a woman who cleans the hair of her child in monkey fashion,

⁵Accession number A.5737.49-3, diameter 6¼ inches, monogrammed "VG." Ex-collection Prince Delaroff, and Georges Aubry, Paris. From a series which probably represented the twelve months. Four of these (two of them dated 1641) are included in the Hermitage collections, among the acquisitions of Catherine II.

⁶Accession number A.5737.49-4, diameter 6½ inches. Described by Hofstede de Groot, *Catalogue Raisonné* (1910), Vol. III, No. 486. Ex-collections Gustave Rothan, Paris (sold May 29th 1890, No. 82) and M. Berolsheimer, Munich. Signed "A. v. Ostade 1657."



Fig. 6 — ADRIAEN VAN OSTADE (1610-1685)
 "Peasant Family in Front of a Barn"
Gift of the Misses Putnam (San Diego)

while the rough-looking father watches the performance with amusement. The figures almost disappear in the darkness, in front of a large barn which is rendered with the fine *clair obscur* the artist learned in his youth, obviously by studying Rembrandt's paintings.

The realistic portrait painting for which Dutch art has been rightly famous is represented by an excellent portrait of a young woman (Fig. 7)⁷ which may be attributed to *Paulus Moreelse*, although the name of Bartholomaeus van der Helst has been mentioned at one time, as a possible attribution. In its solid objectivity it gives us perhaps a better idea of the calm, reserved, and quietly observing Dutch types of the great epoch than do Rembrandt's more emotional and dramatically represented portraits of this time (about 1635). Well known from the Captain Holford Collection,

the painting was sold under the name of *Ferdinand Bol*, Rembrandt's pupil and great rival; but after it was cleaned it lost the warm yellow tone produced by the heavy coating of century-old varnish, and it appeared in the cool grey color-scheme much nearer to the early Amsterdam school of the artists around Nicolaes Elias and Mierevelt, from whom Moreelse derived, than to the Rembrandt school. Moreelse, not always as excellent as in our portrait, reached here an unusual high level as a painter of the Dutch *bourgeoisie* outside the more aristocratic sphere of Rembrandt. To judge from the costume, this work must have been painted at the end of his career (c.1637).

The still life painters are usually mentioned last in the history of Dutch painting, but unjustly so, as the development of their art is perhaps more due to a purely aesthetic pleasure than that of other fields like portrait or genre painting. The

⁷Accession number A.5933.50-64, 66 x 53 inches.



Fig. 7 — PAULUS MOREELSE (1571-1638)

"Portrait of a Young Woman"

Gift of the Hearst Corporation

appreciation of still life painting gives a high idea of art understanding on the part of the Dutch public, especially if we consider that there was a great demand for such paintings, with innumerable ones created in Holland in the seventeenth century and many of these still in existence. We may question whether it is true, as has been said with regard to their origin, that the rich Dutch burghers were so fond of food and drink (wine and beer) that they wished to have their luxurious meals even painted as a wall decoration in their dining rooms! The subject of the still life refers less to food itself, but generally more to the containers of food and drink — plates and glassware, pewter, silverwork and gold, as seen in

our still life by *Willem Claesz Heda* (Fig. 8).⁸ This painting, an anonymous gift to the Museum, shows the pleasure of the artist in representing a shimmering and gorgeous ensemble of baroque silver and gold wares, of Dutch and Venetian glass, of porcelain plates and a pewter jug. The ham placed upon a dish in the right corner was in its material substance scarcely the essential cause for painting the picture, but is used as a fine color contrast to the generally grey and brown shades of the other objects on the table, on which the reflections of light are rendered with great skill.

⁸Accession number A.5608.50-9, 29¼ x 34 inches.

Fig. 8 — WILLIAM CLAESZ HEDA (1594-1678)
"Still Life"
Anonymous Gift



The comparison of this work of a Haarlem still life painter of the Frans Hals period, with a small painting by *Abraham van Beyeren* (Fig. 3)⁹ who was one of the best painters in this field during the Rembrandt period, explains how Dutch painting developed from the relief-like style with its cool grey tones, at the early Baroque period, to that of the full rounded forms with deep warm colors of the later Baroque. Still more than in the Heda, we see here that the subject

⁹Accession number L.2100.50-69, 16½ x 13¾ inches.

matter — a few peaches with accessories lying on a table — means little to the artist, who is mostly concerned with an exquisite rendering of the color and light effects, and a careful construction of the composition. This is the beginning of that *l'art pour l'art* conception of the French Impressionists who, from Courbet to Renoir, produced still lifes of similar unpretentious motifs, concentrating upon the aesthetic values like their predecessors in seventeenth century Holland.

— W. R. VALENTINER

A PORTRAIT by BARON GROS

A recent gift is greatly welcomed, to bridge a gap in the Museum collections of French art. Belonging to the turn of the century, it follows a growing representation of 18th century work, and in turn is followed by examples of the Barbizon school, in a sequence leading to the De Sylva collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masters.

*Portrait of Lieutenant Legrand*¹ excellently represents the Napoleonic court painter Antoine Jean Gros (1771-1835). It takes an added importance from the fact that until a decade ago, there were only two paintings by Baron Gros in American museum collections.

The handsome young lieutenant who appears as the subject of our portrait was a son of Count Juste Alexandre Legrand, one of Napoleon's generals, distinguished for personal bravery at Austerlitz, Wagram and other battlefields. Gros also painted a portrait of the mother, Countess Legrand. The family home was at Plessier-Sur-St. Just, arr. Clermont, Oise, in a region where many tall blond Norman types (such as our lieutenant) may still be seen.

After Joseph Bonaparte was crowned King of Spain in 1808, the populace rebelled against this

foreign monarch. The short and bloody fray which suppressed this outbreak was the scene of young Legrand's death, at the siege of Madrid. His posthumous portrait was commissioned soon after, and was first displayed at the Paris Salon of 1810.

Baron Gros' popularity was originally built upon his pictures glorifying battles and other glittering incidents in the careers of Napoleon and his marshals. But he is now seen with particular interest for the position he occupies as a transitional agent, between the Classicism of David and Ingres and the Romanticism of Géricault and Delacroix, who are often regarded as the forerunners, if not the founders, of "Modern" art. While this view is recent on our side of the Atlantic, it had its beginnings in Paris in the early 1920s, when exhibitions of work by the painters of the First Empire and the succeeding Romanticists led to the virtual rediscovery of Géricault, and a critical reappraisal of Gros as more than a mere battle painter.

Both his parents painted miniatures; and among the Legrands' circle of friends was Madame Vigée Le Brun, who did a sketch of the child Antoine, and encouraged his taste for art. In 1785, at the age of fifteen, he entered the studio of David, the admired artist of the Revolution and fanatical apostle of Historical Painting.

¹Accession number A.5921.49-1, gift of the California Charities Foundation. Size 98 x 68¾ inches.



at Genoa too, living a round of receptions and fetes, while Bonaparte waged his Italian campaign from headquarters in Milan. With the meteoric rise of Napoleon's star, Gros had a strong desire to portray the hero of France in paint; and fate led him to this opportunity through Joséphine, who was perhaps moved as much by his personal charm as by his art.

In Milan, Gros was lodged in the very household of the "Eagle of France," and from this time he was launched into a charmed life. Napoleon gave him an army commission, and the duty of selecting works of art in Italy which were to be sent to Paris as "tribute" — a systematic looting which glorified the collections of the Louvre, but sounds all too familiar to us today! Besides this task, Gros was assigned to direct those military reviews and lavish pageants which were so much a part

David regarded Gros as a favorite pupil, and their relationship was to have a lifelong and sinister effect upon the young painter.

At first unsuccessful in competing for the Prix de Rome, Gros was later able, with the help of David, to obtain travel funds and a passport. He arrived in Genoa in December, 1796 — then at age 25 and said to have been one of the handsomest men of the epoch.

La Citoyenne Joséphine and her circle of beautiful, if parvenu, women friends were then

of the dazzling pomp of the Napoleonic courts.

While Napoleon himself moved on, to the Egyptian and other campaigns, Gros remained in Italy until 1804, during which time he painted many portraits, but no heroic canvases except the much admired "Napoleon at the Bridge of Arcola."

Returning to Paris he was established, with other official painters, in the expropriated Capuchin convent, where (if the door of Ingres' cell was always closed) Gros lived in a hubbub of

activity, with constant streams of officers arriving to pose for portraits and to talk about old times. At the Salon of 1804 his "Napoleon's Visit to the Plague-ridden at Jaffa" was greeted with the wild public acclaim that reflected the prevalent worship of Napoleon himself; and throughout the remainder of Napoleon's regime, Gros received the highest honors and awards for his portraits and immense contemporary scenes.

With the eclipse of Napoleon, Gros stayed in Paris and when David went into exile he inherited his master's school of painting. Through all his life he was torn by conflicting loyalties and divided allegiances, and though Gros secretly plotted for the return of his idol Napoleon, he appeared to transfer his devotion to the Bourbon restoration. Louis XVIII commissioned him to paint his portrait and to produce murals and ceilings in the Louvre, or even to alter his own ceiling in the dome of the Pantheon, where the "offending figure" of Napoleon must be replaced with that of Louis XVIII! In reward for this, Gros was granted the title of Baron of France by the next king, Charles X, in 1824.

For nearly twenty years a flow of promising young artists passed through the ateliers of Gros — among them Géricault and Delacroix, the sculptor Barye, Thomas Couture (later the teacher of Edouard Manet), the English Bonington, and Delestre, who wrote a biography of his master.²

²J. B. Delestre, *Gros, sa vie et ses Ouvrages* (Paris, 1867).

During his years of exile, David wrote bitter letters berating Gros for his preoccupation with "ignoble trifles," and urging him to return to the "Historical Paintings" worthy of his brush. He indeed ended his career with such a painting in the year of his tragic death, the "Hercules and Diomedes" which was met with derision and scorn when shown at the Salon of 1835.

Something of the grandeur of his larger works distinguishes his *Portrait of Lieutenant Legrand*, which at the same time recalls the charming manner of the 18th century British portrait artists. Goldwater³ speaks of "an easy naturalism of general effect that offers a contrast with the weighty detailed realism of his battle scenes." He continues:

"The English influence is obvious in the posthumous *Portrait of Lt. Legrand*, (Salon of 1810), which in the elongation of its figures and its relating of sitter to background is in the direct tradition of the fashionable XVIII century portrait. It was perhaps in an effort to keep to the form and its proportions that Gros produced the strange foreshortening of the horse's forequarters; one need only look at the *Horse of Mustapha Pasha* (Besançon Museum) to be certain he was aware of it."

Many times exhibited, our portrait was formerly in the Paris collections of Pierre Paulet and the Duc de Trevisé.

— JAMES B. BYRNES

³Robert J. Goldwater, "Gros-Géricault-Delacroix," in *Art in America*, Vol. XXVII (Jan. 1939, pp. 37-39).

A CHIEN BOWL

In ancient Chinese ceramics, one of the most important types of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) is *Chien* ware, which was made in the coastal province of Fukien. Mr. Plumer in 1935 discovered the original kiln site, some ten *li* south of the town of Shui-chi in northern Fukien, where he found three huge kiln-waste piles which gave unmistakable evidence of the existence there in former times of the kilns which produced this

famous Sung pottery.¹ The ware, which seems to have been restricted entirely to tea-bowls, was already famous in the Sung period and achieved great renown in Japan, where it became the official ware for use in the Tea Ceremony. As early as the Ming dynasty, Chien-yao (*Chien* ware) had become rare, and Japanese pirates who swooped

¹*Illustrated London News*, Oct. 26, 1935 (pp. 679-683, 718).

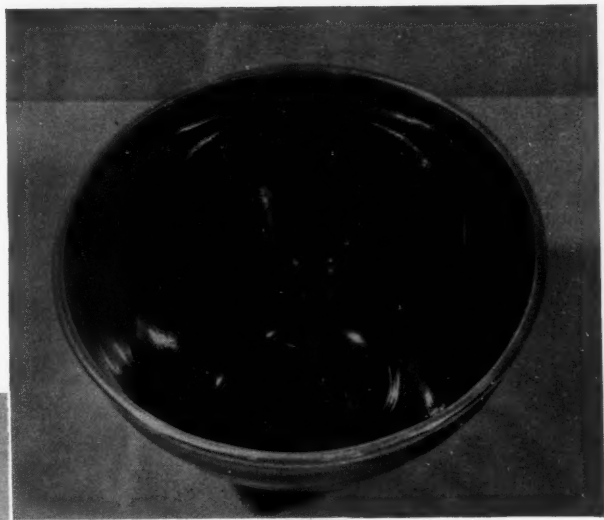
down upon the Fukien coast are said to have demanded examples of the much sought-after ware as ransom. In Japan it has always been called *temmoku*, supposedly after T'ien-mu Shan, the "Eye of Heaven" mountain in China.

The Los Angeles County Museum has been fortunate in acquiring a fine example.² Like all true *Chien* ware, this bowl is distinguished by a coarse, dark-grey stoneware body which would retain the heat of the tea yet be cool to the touch,

²Accession number L.2100.51-5. Museum Associates, the Balch Fund. Height 2¾ inches, diameter 5 inches.

and a lustrous blue-black glaze. On the outside this glaze stops short of the base in a thick irregular welt, while inside it forms a deep pool on the bottom of the bowl. The glaze is streaked with brown markings known as "hare's fur," giving it a beautiful, rich texture. These markings are the result of ferric oxide crystallizing after the firing. The edge of the bowl is fitted with a silver rim, for this particular glaze usually slipped, leaving the mouth rim exposed and rough. The silver band thus made it easier to drink from the bowl.

— HENRY TRUBNER



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